

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mason, who is alleged to be in this country on a minister's permit from January, 1972, to January, 1973, as a result of special arrangements between the United States Department of Justice and officers of the Canadian government?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I must say I never heard of the gentleman, but I will be very glad to take notice of the question and see if a statement is called for in a case like this.

Mr. Baldwin: Would the Prime Minister also be good enough to investigate and report on the further allegation that Mr. Pershing Gervais is in this country partly as a result of statements made to him by a Canadian government official that there would be no problems with the Canadian government over immigration, entry, work permits and other regulations?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I will be very glad to look into the matter. Perhaps the hon. member could jot down the name on a piece of paper so I would be able to trace it.

Mr. Baldwin: He is already on record.

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[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF SECRETARY GENERAL OF UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Speaker: Order. Perhaps the House will allow me to interrupt the question period for a moment in order to draw attention to the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of a distinguished visitor in the person of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Waldheim.

As hon. members know, Mr. Waldheim is not a newcomer in our country. He was first minister plenipotentiary and later ambassador of Austria to Canada from 1956 to 1960. So, it is an old friend that we welcome today.

[English]

Mr. Waldheim was appointed Secretary General of the United Nations in succession to U Thant. He is the fourth incumbent of an office described as the highest to which a diplomat can aspire, and also as the most impossible job in the world.

Mr. Waldheim emphasized at the time of his appointment that the United Nations was an instrument of peace and that it was up to the member states to ensure that it fulfilled this role. The Secretary General, who has already been honoured and decorated by numerous countries, knows that he enjoys the confidence of a body representative of most of the nations of the world. We pray that under Mr. Waldheim's guiding hand the world organization will successfully fulfil the role for which it was destined.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Baldwin.]

COMMUNICATIONS

BELL CANADA RATE INCREASES—SUGGESTED REPRESENTATIONS TO SECURE REDUCED RATES FOR PENSIONERS

Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Communications. Considering the recent ruling of the Canadian Transport Commission authorizing increases in Bell Telephone rates, would the minister contact the Bell Telephone Company and the Canadian Transport Commission to see if they could not arrange special reduced rates for pensioners similar to those which now apply on trains and aircraft?

Hon. Robert Stanbury (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting idea which I have discussed with Bell officials informally on occasion, but it does appear that the law now prevents discrimination among customers. Therefore this is something which might be further discussed in the House, if the hon. member would like to do so.

BELL CANADA RATE INCREASES—GOVERNMENT ACTION RESPECTING TRANSPORT COMMISSION DECISION

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Communications some questions which I addressed to the Prime Minister yesterday arising out of the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission to grant the application for rate increases by Bell Canada totalling, as I mentioned yesterday, over \$47 million a year. May I ask the minister whether he and his department are studying the matter with a view to taking action with respect to the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission?

Hon. Robert Stanbury (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I have asked my departmental officials to study the matter and they are doing so.

Mr. Lewis: May I draw the minister's attention, as I did with the Prime Minister yesterday, to the fact that both under a section of the Railway Act, section 335(4) if I remember correctly, and under a section of the Natural Transportation Act—

• (1440)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have some reservations about the hon. member drawing sections of statutes to the attention of the minister. Perhaps the hon. member might like to ask the question. It might be easier for the Chair.

Mr. Lewis: Let me put it this way, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that under both the Railway Act and the National Transportation Act the government has authority (a) to demand all information in the possession of both the company and the commission and (b) to rescind or vary any order or decision made by the commission, is the minister giving consideration to rescinding the order of the commission so that Bell customers in Canada do not have to provide interest-free capital to this large corporation?